Message Text

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CONFIDENTIAL GENEVA 5589

FOR EUR/RPM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, PFOR, XG

SUBJECT: CSCE POLICY: DURATION OF STAGE III

REFS: A. GENEVA 4976 (NOTAL); B. STATE 154636 (NOTAL)

1. POSTPONEMENT OF STAGE III UNTIL JULY 30 HAS APPARENTLY CAUSED FINNISH DELEGATION TO DROP THE IDEA OF SPREADING THREE WORKING DAYS OF STAGE III OVER FOUR DAYS. WORKING ASSUMPTION ON WHICH DISCUSSIONS IN WORKING GROUP ON STAGE III PREPARATIONS HAS BEEN BASED IS THAT SUMMIT WILL BEGIN ON MORNING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 30 AND CONCLUDE IN EARLY EVENING OF FRIDAY, AUGUST 1. IT HAS BEEN TENTATIVELY AGREED THAT WORKING SESSIONS WILL BE HELD FROM 1000 TO 1300 AND FROM 1530 TO 1830 EACH DAY. THE FINNISH REP HAS ANNOUNCED TENTATIVE PLANS FOR A FORMAL DINNER HOSTED BY PRESIDENT KEKONNEN AT 2000 ON THE FIRST DAY AND FOR A LARGE, INFORMAL RECEPTION ON THE EVENING OF THE THIRD DAY.

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2. DESPITE GENERAL AGREEMENT FOR BEGINNING ON MORNING OF

JULY 30, FRENCH DELEGATION HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN SUGGEST-ING THAT A PREFERABLE STARTING TIME WOULD BE AT ABOUT 1500 ON JULY 30. THEY SAY GISCARD CAN SPEND ONLY TWO NIGHTS IN HELSINKI AND WOULD NEED THE MORNING OF THE FIRST DAY FOR TRAVEL. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE FRENCH HAVE VOTED THAT THEIR CABINET HAS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JULY 30 WHICH WILL BE DIFFICULT TO POSTPONE. ALTHOUGH NOT YET FORMALLY PROPOSING THE IDEA, FRENCH REPS SAY THAT IF THE CABINET MEETING CANNOT BE POSTPONED, THEY MAY HAVE TO ASK THAT THE OPENING SESSION OF STAGE III BE POSTPONED UNTIL 1700 ON JULY 30.

3. IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS, WE HAVE TAKEN POSITION THAT STAGE III SHOULD BE KEPT AS SHORT AS POSSIBLE. THUS, DESPITE PROSPECT OF CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION FROM OTHER DELS, WE HAVE BEEN READY TO SUPPORT FRENCH IDEA FOR 1500 COMMENCEMENT OF STAGE III ON JULY 30. FINNISH DELEGATION BELIEVES STAGE III COULD BE COMPLETED IN TWO AND ONE HALF DAYS, IF SPEECHES ARE KEPT TO 15 MINUTES. IF SHORTER SPEECHES WERE AGREED (10-12 MINUTES) A 1700 STARTING TIME WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE FEASIBLE, ALTHOUGH FINNISH HOSTS HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THIS, AND SEVERAL OTHER DELEGATIONS MAY FEEL SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD MAKE FOR AN INAPPROPRIATELY BRIEF STAGE III. HOWEVER, BEGINNING LATE ON THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 30 COULD RESULT IN SOME SLIPPAGE OF TIME OF CLOSURE INTO EVENING OF AUGUST 1.

4. FOR THIS REASON WE PLAN TO DISCOURAGE FRENCH FROM TRYING TO SHORTEN STAGE III ANY FURTHER, AND TO MAINTAIN STARTING TIME OF 1500 ON JULY 30. GIVEN IMMINENT NEED FOR DECISION ON THIS QUESTION, WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY FURTHER COMMENTS DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON STAGE III SCHEDULE ASAP.ABRAMS

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